

Mayor's Opioid Task Force Meeting
October 20, 2025
City Hall | 111 N Main Street | Bristol, CT 06010

MINUTES

1. Call to Order and Member Introduction

The meeting was called to order at 5:01 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Acceptance of the January 21, 2025 Minutes.

Motion to Accept the minutes by Sandra Kamens, second by Deputy Chief Osborne, all in favor. None opposed. Motion carries and Minutes are accepted.

3. Update Items

A. Update from Bristol Burlington Health District on Overdoses

Angie Karwowski provided an update on overdose and death statistics for 2025 to date. She reported that there have been 10 fewer overdoses compared to last year, attributing the decrease to increased Narcan distribution and reduced stigma surrounding its use. Angie also noted that most overdoses involved a combination of substances rather than a single drug.

Death totals for 2025: January (2), February (1), March (1), April (2), May (1), June (2), July (6), August (0), September (0), and October (0).

She also shared that more than 100 people attended their Labor Day event, where Narcan was distributed. Angie emphasized that the stigma around Narcan use continues to decline, with more people recognizing its importance in saving lives.

B. Cobra & Bristol Police Partnership

Deputy Chief Osborne discussed a grant that was received by Marco Palmieri of the Bristol Burlington Health District for recovery coaches for non-fatal overdoses. This grant will provide for more resources.

C. B.E.S.T

a. Survey Results Presentation

Deedra W. provided the group with a PowerPoint presentation, and Nina reviewed each slide as it was presented. The presentation summarized survey results from middle and high school students in Bristol regarding substance use, mental health, and related topics. According to the data, nearly all categories showed improvement, with declines in substance use, ease of access, and other related factors.

Following the presentation, Deedra offered a recap of the past ten years of their efforts, including administering these surveys at four Bristol schools. Based on the findings, she noted that they now see a need to reach students at an earlier age for greater impact. She highlighted

the strong partnerships they've built with various organizations, which have allowed them to engage in community spaces and initiatives such as signage, billboards, and collaborations with the Bristol-Burlington Health District (BBHD).

Deedra also mentioned that they are currently in their tenth year of receiving federal grant funding, which is set to expire in September 2026. They will need to explore additional grant opportunities to sustain their work beyond that date. She concluded by discussing future goals for B.E.S.T. and identifying new ways to continue supporting Bristol's youth.

D. Mayor's Update

a. Opioid Settlement Update

Funds have been utilized to address emergency department safety concerns, and the group is now one year into the Journey Home Program. Currently, there is approximately \$116,000 remaining in the opioid settlement fund. There is also a pending case involving Purdue Pharma and the Sackler family, which is expected to result in additional funds, with 15% allocated to municipalities.

An update was provided on the four individuals participating in the Journey Home Program. Two individuals remain housed, one has obtained a housing voucher (not funded through the opioid settlement) and has left their current unit while searching for a new home, and the fourth individual has left their unit and plans to return to their home state outside of Connecticut. A discussion was had about the efficacy of the program and how some of the people have refused housing.

A new initiative, the **Hero Program** through DMHAS, was also discussed. The program is expected to launch soon, and further details will be shared once it is officially rolled out.

4. New Business

None.

5. Old business

None.

6. Announcements

None.

7. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn by Sandra Kamens, seconded by Deputy Chief Robert Osborne at 6:03 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,
Maria Theam, Recording Secretary